



The Ehlers e-Newsletter

For the Week of September 13, 2004

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News from Congressman Ehlers ...

EHLERS INTRODUCES RESOLUTION HONORING NOAA'S EFFORTS DURING HURRICANES CHARLEY & FRANCES – Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, Wednesday introduced legislation commending the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its employees for their dedication and hard work during Hurricanes Charley and Frances.

For more information, read the press release on our webpage:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/090804NOAAHurricanes.html

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2004

On Monday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

Suspensions (17 bills):

(Bills on suspension are generally considered non-controversial and have reduced debate time, but require a two-thirds majority vote to be passed.)

- 1) **H.Con.Res. 407 - Saluting the life and courage of the late Commander Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, United States Navy (retired), who commanded the U.S.S. Pueblo (AGER-2) at the time of its capture by North Korea on 1/23/1968.**
- 2) **H.Con.Res. 363 - Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic:** Resolves that Congress: (1) condemns the numerous violations of fundamental human rights by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic; (2) calls on the international community to adopt a resolution at the upcoming 60th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which details the dismal human rights record of Syria and establishes a Special Rapporteur to further investigate these abuses; (3) expresses its support for the people of Syria in their daily struggle for freedom, respect for human rights and civil liberties, democratic self-governance, and the establishment of the rule of law; (4) encourages the President and the Secretary of State, acting through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (managed by the Department of State) and other avenues, to reach out to dissidents, human rights activists, and the pro-democracy opposition in Syria, and to assist them in

- their efforts; and (5) urges the adoption and pursuit of these and other policies to seek a democratic government in Syria that will restore freedom to the people of Syria, cease the illegal occupation by Syria of the Lebanese Republic, abandon support for terrorism by Syria, and live in peace and security with the international community.
- 3) **H.Res. 667 - Expressing support for freedom in Hong Kong:** Resolves that the House declares that the people of Hong Kong should be free to determine the pace and scope of constitutional developments; and calls upon the President of the United States to call upon the People's Republic of China, the National People's Congress, and any groups appointed by the Government of the People's Republic of China to guarantee that all revisions of Hong Kong law reflect the wishes of the people of Hong Kong as expressed through a fully democratically elected legislature and chief executive; declare that the continued lack of a fully democratically elected legislature in Hong Kong is contrary to the vision of democracy set forth in the agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong, done at Beijing on December 19, 1984 (the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984); and call upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to honor its treaty obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984.
 - 4) **H.Res. 760 - Condemning the series of terrorist attacks against the Russian Federation that occurred in late August and early September 2004:** Resolves that the House deplores the series of terrorist attacks against the Russian Federation that occurred in late August and early September 2004; expresses its heartfelt condolences to the families of the individuals murdered in the terrorist attacks, expresses its sympathies to the individuals injured in the attacks, and conveys its hope for the rapid and complete recovery of all such injured individuals; and stands in solidarity with the Russian people in efforts to combat terrorism throughout the world.
 - 5) **H.R. 3478 - National Archives and Records Administration Efficiency Act of 2003:** Designed to make the operations of the National Archives more efficient in several key areas and to improve their service to Federal agencies and the public.
 - 6) **H.R. 4632 - Archie Spigner Post Office Building Designation Act** (*St. Albans, N.Y.*)
 - 7) **H.Res. 717 - Honoring former President William Jefferson Clinton on the occasion of his 58th birthday**
 - 8) **S.Con.Res. 127 - Expressing the sense of Congress that the President should designate September 11 as a national day of voluntary service, charity, and compassion:** Resolves that the President should designate September 11 as an annually recognized day of voluntary service, charity, and compassion and Congress urges the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate and personal expressions of service, charity, and compassion toward others.
 - 9) **H.R. 4836 - Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center Designation Act** (*Amarillo, Texas*)

- 10) **H.R. 1318 - Thomas P. Noonan, Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic Designation Act** (*Sunnyside, Queens, N.Y.*)
- 11) **H.R. 4027 - To authorize the Secretary of Commerce to make available to the University of Miami property under the administrative jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Virginia Key, Florida, for use by the University for a Marine Life Science Center.**
- 12) **H.R. 4481 – Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Boundary Adjustment Act of 2004** (*Missouri*)
- 13) **S. 1576 - Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act of 2004** (*West Virginia*)
- 14) **H.R. 2457 - Castillo de San Marcos National Monument Preservation and Education Act:** Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to grant funds for an educational center for the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument in St. Augustine, Fla. Two million dollars will remain available until expended for land acquisition for the center from willing owners only and for design and planning of the center. In addition to these funds, the Secretary of the Interior will also set aside \$2 million to remain available until expended for construction of the center.
- 15) **H.R. 3056 - To clarify the boundaries of the John H. Chafee Coast Barrier Resources System Cedar Keys Unit P25 on Otherwise Protected Area P25P:** Revises the Cedar Key Unit (P25) in Florida to replace one map that inaccurately includes private property within the Coastal Barrier Unit. This land was recently identified by the Fish and Wildlife Service when the area was remapped using modern digitized technology.
- 16) **H.R. 2400 - To amend the Organic Act of Guam for the purposes of clarifying the local judicial structure of Guam:** Amends the Organic Act of Guam to establish the Supreme Court of Guam as the highest local court in the territory. H.R. 2400 also amends the Organic Act to require a unified judicial system composed of: (1) an appellate court designated as the ‘Supreme Court of Guam’; (2) a trial court designated as the ‘Superior Court of Guam’; and (3) other lower local courts as may have been or may hereafter be established by the laws of Guam.
- 17) **H.R. 5008 - To provide an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through September 30, 2004.**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

On Tuesday, the House will convene at 9 a.m. for morning hour and 10 a.m. for legislative business.

Suspensions (3 bills):

- 1) **H.R. 3369 - Nonprofit Athletic Organization Protection Act of 2003:** Exempts a nonprofit athletic organization from liability for harm caused by an act or omission in the adoption of rules for sanctioned or approved athletic competitions or practices if: (1) the organization was acting within the scope of its duties; (2) the organization was properly licensed, certified, or authorized for the competition or practice; and (3) the harm was not caused by the organization's willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless misconduct. Makes exceptions

where state law: (1) requires such an organization to adhere to risk management procedures, including mandatory training; (2) makes the organization liable for the acts or omissions of its employees, agents, and volunteers to the same extent as an employer is liable for its employees; and (3) makes a limitation of liability inapplicable if the civil action was brought by an officer of a state or local government.

- 2) **H.R. 1787 - Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act of 2003:** *Information about this bill was not available at time of publication.*
- 3) **H.R. 1084 - Volunteer Pilot Organization Protection:** Amends the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 to exempt from liability a nonprofit volunteer pilot organization that flies for public benefit, its staff members, and its volunteers for harm caused by a volunteer while flying, in furtherance of the purpose of the organization, an aircraft for which the volunteer was properly licensed and individually insured.

H.R. 4571 - Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2004: Amends Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to: (1) require courts to impose sanctions on attorneys, law firms, or parties who file frivolous lawsuits (currently discretionary); (2) disallow the withdrawal or correction of pleadings to avoid Rule 11 sanctions; (3) require courts to award parties prevailing on Rule 11 motions reasonable expenses and attorney's fees, if warranted; (4) authorize courts to impose Rule 11 sanctions that include reimbursement of a party's reasonable litigation costs in connection with frivolous lawsuits; and (5) make the discovery phase of litigation subject to Rule 11 sanctions.

H.R. 5025 - Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005: In total, the bill provides more than \$89.9 billion in total budgetary resources, an increase of \$1 billion more than the President's request and \$495 million below the FY04 level. Discretionary spending is \$25.4 billion, \$275 million below the President's request and \$2.9 billion below the FY04 level.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2004

On Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m.

Continue consideration of H.R. 5025 - Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005: *See above.*

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 AND 17, 2004

On Thursday and Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

** Possible Motions to go to Conference*

** Possible Motions to Instruct Conferees*

Historical Tidbits

On Sept. 13 ...

1788 - The Constitutional Convention decided that the first federal election was to be held on Wednesday the following February. On that day George Washington was elected as the first president of the United States. In addition, New York City was named the

temporary national capital.

1789 - The United States Government took out its first loan.

1948 - Margaret Chase Smith was elected to the U.S. Senate and became the first woman to serve in both houses of the U.S. Congress.

1960 - The U.S. Federal Communications Commission banned payola.

1994 - U.S. President Bill Clinton signed a \$30 billion crime bill into law.

2001 - U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell named Osama bin Laden as the prime suspect in the terror attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Limited commercial flights resumed in the U.S. for the first time in two days.

On Sept. 14 ...

1807 - Former U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr was acquitted of a misdemeanor charge. Two weeks earlier Burr had been found innocent of treason.

1847 - U.S. forces took control of Mexico City under the leadership of Gen. Winfield Scott.

1901 - U.S. President William McKinley died of gunshot wounds inflicted by an assassin. Theodore Roosevelt, at age 42, succeeded him.

1940 - The Selective Service Act was passed by the U.S. Congress providing the first peacetime draft in the United States.

1983 - The U.S. House of Representatives voted 416-0 in a resolution condemning the Soviet Union for the shooting down of a Korean jet on September 1.

On Sept. 15 ...

1789 - The U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs was renamed the Department of State.

1983 - The U.S. Senate joined the U.S. House of Representatives in their condemning of the Soviet Union for shooting down a Korean jet with 269 people onboard.

1994 - U.S. President Clinton told Haiti's military leaders "Your time is up. Leave now or we will force you from power."

On Sept. 16 ...

1782 - The Great Seal of the United States was impressed on document to negotiate a prisoner of war agreement with the British. It was the first official use of the impression.

1919 - The American Legion was incorporated by an act of the U.S. Congress.

1940 - U.S. President Roosevelt signed into law the Selective Training and Service Act, which set up the first peacetime military draft in U.S. history.

1940 - Samuel T. Rayburn of Texas was elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. He served for 17 years.

1974 - U.S. President Ford announced a conditional amnesty program for draft-evaders and deserters during the Vietnam War.

1990 - An eight-minute videotape of an address by U.S. President Bush was shown on Iraqi television. The message warned that action of Saddam Hussein could plunge them into a war "against the world."

1991 - A federal judge in Washington dismissed the Iran-Contra charges against Oliver North.

On Sept. 17 ...

1778 - The United States signed its first treaty with a Native American tribe, the Delaware Nation.

1787 - The Constitution of the United States of America was signed by delegates at the Constitutional Convention.

1796 - U.S. President George Washington's Farewell Address was read before the U.S. Congress.

1947 - The first U.S. Secretary of Defense, James V. Forrestal, was sworn in to office.

1998 - The United States government offered a reward for the capture of Haroun Fazil for his role in the U.S. bombing in Kenya on August 7, 1998.

1998 - The U.S. announced a plan that would compensate victims in the Kenya and Tanzania U.S. Embassy bombings on August 7, 1998.

(Information from <http://www.on-this-day.com>)